



Wincanton Rural District Council.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year Ending 31st December, 1940.



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WINCANTON,
SOMERSET,
July, 1941.

TO THE RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL OF WINCANTON.

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to lay before you my Annual Report for the year 1940.

1.—General Statistics.

Area (in acres)	...	...	64,540
Population (1938)	...	...	17,390
Number of inhabited houses (1931)	...	...	4,361
Number of families or separate occupiers (1931)	...	...	4,385
Rateable Value	...	...	£74,370
Produce of Penny Rate (estimated)	...	...	£300

2.—Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

BIRTHS.

		Males.	Females.		
	Total	117	91		
Live Births	...	Legitimate 110	89	Birth Rate	14.6
		Illegitimate 7	2		
	Total	7	4		
Stillbirths	..	Legitimate 7	4	Birth Rate	0.55
		Illegitimate —	—		

DEATHS.

Deaths from all causes	263	135	128	Death Rate	14.3
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Number of Women dying in, or in consequence of, childbirth :—

(a) from sepsis	nil.
(b) from other causes	...	...	nil.

Deaths of Infants under one year of age :—

Legitimate	5	Illegitimate	1.	Total	6.
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Deaths of Infants under one week	3
„ „ from one to four weeks (inclusive)	1
„ „ from one to six months	3
„ „ from six to twelve months	...	...	...	0

Total 7

Deaths from Measles (all ages)	...	...	....	...	nil
„ Whooping Cough (all ages)		...	...	...	nil
„ Diarrhœa (under two years of age)		...	...	...	nil

There has not been any excessive mortality during the year.

3.—Notifiable Diseases during the Year.

DISEASE.				Total Cases Notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Diphtheria	...	...	..	5	3	1
Scarlet Fever	...	..	..	45	41	nil
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	...	..	1	nil	nil
Pneumonia (all forms)		..	...	25	nil	16
Whooping Cough	...	...	..	36	nil	nil
Erysipelas	...	...	....	3	nil	nil
Pneumococcal Meningitis		..	..	1	1	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...		...	2	nil	nil
Measles	...	...	...	545	21	nil
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis	...		..	16	8	nil
Acute Poliomyelitis	...		..	2	nil	1
Tuberculosis	...	...	..	19	?	9
(a) Respiratory	...	...	...	14		8
(b) Non-respiratory	....			5		1

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

	Cases.			Vision un- impaired.	Vision impaired.	Total Blindness,	Deaths.
	Notified.	Treated.					
		At home.	In hospital.				
	2	2	—	2	—	—	—

Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulation, 1925—
No action taken.

Public Health Act, 1925, Section 62—
No action taken.

4.—Causes of Sickness.

An epidemic of Measles, commencing at the end of 1939, continued throughout the year, and extended over the whole of the District. The disease attacked young children as a rule, but there were some cases in young adults. The type was a mild one, as exemplified by the fact that there were between 500 and 600 cases in the District but no deaths.

An epidemic of Whooping Cough also occurred throughout the District and extended throughout the year.

A few cases of Cerebro-Spinal Fever occurred during the year, a disease usually occurring during a War. Owing to the new treatment by Chemiotherapy there were no deaths.

The following Schools were closed during the year :—

For Coughs and Colds—Horsington and Milborne Port.

For Influenza—Charlton Musgrove.

For Measles—Cucklington.

5.—Summary of Nursing Arrangements, Hospital and other Institutions available in the District.

A.—Professional Nursing in the Home.

(1) *General*.—There are nine nurses in the district engaged in general district work who are affiliated to the County Nursing Association, and between them they cover the whole district.

(2) *For Infectious Diseases*.—Some of the cases of infectious diseases were removed to the Isolation Hospital, the remainder were either nursed by their relatives or by nurses obtained from Nursing Homes or Hospitals outside the district.

B.—Midwives.

There are eight certified midwives practising in the district.

C.—Clinics and Treatment Centres.

In Wincanton there is one Tuberculosis Dispensary provided and staffed by the County Council.

D.—Hospitals available for the District.

(1) *Tuberculosis*.—One at Wincanton.

(2) *Fever*.—One at Wincanton, to which the following cases were admitted during the year.

Disease.	Number Admitted.	Number Died.
Scarlet Fever	45	nil
Diphtheria	5	1
Measles	21	nil
Cerebro-Spinal Fever	8	nil
Pneumococcal Meningitis	1	1
	—	—
	80	2
	—	—

(3) *Other*.—There is one Cottage Hospital at Wincanton, known as the “Wincanton and East Somerset Memorial Hospital,” for the treatment of general, medical and surgical cases.

There is one Cottage Hospital at Templecombe, known as the “Merthyr Guest Memorial Hospital,” for the treatment of general, medical and surgical cases; in addition, there are three wards available for Maternity Cases.

There is a Public Assistance Institution at Wincanton for the aged and infirm under the Public Assistance Committee.

E.—Institutional Provision for Unmarried Mothers, Illegitimate Infants and Homeless Children.

The only Institutions for any of the above are the Public Assistance Institution and Rodber House, Wincanton (for boys only), which are under the control of the Public Assistance Committee.

F.—Ambulance Facilities.

(1) *For Infectious Cases*.—A motor ambulance is kept at the Isolation Hospital at Wincanton for the collection and removal of infectious cases.

(2) *For Non-Infectious and Accident Cases*.—A motor ambulance, built and equipped by the Wincanton Rural District Council, is kept at Messrs. The Wincanton Transport and Engineering Co., Wincanton, Tel. 3262.

6.—Laboratory Work.

Examinations of bacteriological and pathological specimens are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory at Taunton, and considerable use of this laboratory has been made during the year.

A supply of diphtheria antitoxin is kept at the Isolation Hospital, Wincanton.

7.—Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.

There is one Sanitary Inspector and Housing Surveyor, one Assistant Sanitary Inspector and one Temporary Additional Assistant (all whole time officers), a Public Health Inspector and myself (part time officers).

There are also 2 Health Visitors in the District.

8.—Water Supplies.

Penselwood.—The work on the location of the springs on Rowe Farm at Penselwood and the collection of water therefrom has continued, but is not yet complete.

Shepton Montague.—An extension of the main has been made to Knowle Park Farm and land.

Henstridge.—An extension has been completed at Shaftesbury Road, serving three houses and land.

9.—Drainage and Sewerage.

Castle Cary.—At the end of the year the remodelling of the works was almost complete.

Ansford.—The new sewer serving part of the parish of Ansford were completed. Sewer connections have been made in respect of many of the houses.

Camping Sites.

No Camping Sites in this District have been registered.

Generally the only cases of Camping which occurred were cases of 2 or 3 days duration.

No special difficulties in connection with Camping are anticipated.

10.—Housing.

(Particulars as regards overcrowding and as to sufficiency of houses to meet demand).

The number of cases of known overcrowding within the definition of the Housing Act has increased from 2 at the end of 1939 to 3 at the end of 1940. In addition 6 were discovered and abated during the year. Two of the cases of overcrowding occurred in unfit houses requisitioned by the Council for the use of Evacuees.

There are many houses in which conditions are unsatisfactory owing to the large number of persons occupying houses with a small number of bedrooms. At the same time there remain a number of houses in which the number of occupants is small in proportion to the amount of room available.

11.—Ministry of Health Enquiries.

None.

12.—Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) *Milk Supply.*

(1) Number of Producers on the Register	...	...	....	555
(2) Number of Distributors on the Register—				
(a) Distributors who are also Producers	...	...	....	37
(b) Distributors only	...	...	....	3

(b) *Meat Supervision.*

SLAUGHTER HOUSES—

Licensed 3. Registered 16. Total 19.

13.—Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

Premises. (1)	Number of		
	Inspections. (2)	Written Notices (3)	Occupiers prosecuted. (4)
<u>Factories</u> with mechanical power	58	—	—
<u>Factories</u> without mechanical power ...	49	6	—
<u>Other Premises</u> under the Act ... (Other than Outworkers' premises).	—	—	—
TOTAL ...	109	6	6

2.—Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Particulars. (1)	Number of Defects.			Number of offences in respect of which Prosecutions were instituted. (5)
	Found (2)	Remedied (3)	Referred to H.M. Inspector. (4)	
<i>Nuisances under the Public Health Acts—</i>				
Want of cleanliness	11	7		
Want of ventilation	—	—		
Overcrowding	—	—		
Want of drainage of floors	—	—		
Other nuisances	—	—		
Sanitary accommodation { insufficient	1	—		
{ unsuitable or defective	4	2		
{ not separate for sexes ..	—	—		
<i>Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts—</i>				
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouse (s.101)				
Other offences	6	5		
(Excluding offences relating to Homework and offences under the Sections mentioned in the Schedule to the Ministry of Health (Factories and Workshops Transfer of Powers) Order, 1921) and re-enacted in the Third Schedule to the Factories Act, 1937.				
TOTAL ...	22	14		

Air Raid Precautions.

The Casualty Services under the Air Raid Precautions Act were completed early in the year. And although, fortunately, their services have not, up to the present, been required, the personnel and necessary Ambulances and Cars are all in a state of readiness to undertake any work if and when they are called upon to do so.

There have been formed in the District :—

(a) Six First Aid Units—

- Two at Wincanton.
- One at Templecombe.
- One at Sparkford.
- One at Castle Cary.
- One at Bruton.

As regards vehicles, each of these Units has one Ambulance, one Personnel Car and one Sitting Cases Car.

As regards Personnel, each of these Units has one Ambulance Driver, four Stretcher Bearers, one driver of the Personnel Car and one driver of the Sitting Cases Car.

Each Unit has a Medical Man in charge, with a First Aid Unit Leader under him.

Each Unit has the Standard equipment supplied to these Units.

(b) Two First Aid Points :—

- One at Queen Camel.
- One at Milborne Port.

These Points are adequately staffed and equipped (except Milborne Port, which is lacking in equipment, especially as regards protective clothing and gum boots).

The Units and Points “feed” two Hospitals and one Reserve Hospital in the District :—

- One at Wincanton (The Wincanton and East Somerset Hospital),
- One at Templecombe (The Merthyr Guest Hospital),
- and The Public Assistance Institution at Wincanton as Reserve.

These Hospitals are staffed by the Physicians and Surgeons attached to the Hospitals and the Matrons and Nurses usually working there.

The Report of the Sanitary and Public Health Inspectors are appended.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

T. E. COULSON,

Medical Officer of Health.

COUNCIL OFFICES,

WINCANTON,

April 25th, 1941.

T. E. COULSON, Esq., M.B., F.R.C.S.E.,

Medical Officer of Health,

WINCANTON, SOMERSET.

SIR,

I beg to submit my Annual Report for the year ended December 31st, 1940, which Report I have abbreviated as much as possible.

EVACUATION.

On May 31st I relinquished the work of Chief Billeting Officer when my successor, Miss Marriage, took office. The chief features during the first five months were the steady return of evacuees to their homes and a general disinclination on the part of local billeting Officers to use compulsion in billeting.

WATER SUPPLIES.

The regular examination of the Public Supplies has been continued. 66 Samples have been examined, 51 found satisfactory, 5 fairly satisfactory and 10 unsatisfactory.

The ten unsatisfactory samples were derived from the collecting areas at Penselwood, three from the Coombeside and Rowe Farm areas and seven from the Wincanton Supply, taken on four different occasions.

It was decided to chlorinate the Wincanton supply, the apparatus being installed in November. Although the first analysis after this did not confirm the value of the treatment, the arrangements are such that a positive test of the efficiency of the plant was difficult.

The defects in the Bayford Reservoir have not yet been remedied and therefore the chlorination of water at Salters Hill, even if effective, cannot provide complete safety.

Following complaints referred to in my last Report, a corroded main at The Hardway, South Brewham, has been discarded and the water supply is now satisfactory in this area.

Of two private water supplies sampled one was found to be unsatisfactory and following statutory action a connection was made to the Public Supply.

Of the eleven new houses completed seven have been connected to the public supply.

SEWERAGE.

A number of defects have occurred in the sewerage systems in eight Parishes and the necessary repairs and replacements have been carried out.

Queen Camel and Sparkford.—In the completion of this Scheme the only work remaining to be done is the provision of a flushing syphon at the head of the sewer in Sparkford Street.

The working has been satisfactory and there are already indications that an additional sludge bed is required.

An interesting feature at these works was the occurrence of a pest of spiders, resulting in a web covering the whole of the filters and the fittings and a good deal of the herbage surrounding them. The spiders were identified at the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, as *Leptorrhopum huthwaitii* Camb., a fairly common marsh spider, and the estimated number was three millions. They did not seem to affect the working of the filters and with the onset of the wet weather the number rapidly decreased until the end of the year when none were visible.

In Queen Camel a defect occurred in the sewer from West Camel Road and during the repair of this it was found to be generally defective and to allow a considerable amount of water to infiltrate. The necessary relaying has been deferred until after the war.

Henstridge.—The extension to serve Whitchurch has been completed but owing to shortage of materials only one connection has so far been made.

HOUSING.

There has been a decrease in the necessary repair work to houses as owing to the shortage of building materials, only informal action under the Housing Act has been taken during the year.

The considerable increase in the population has resulted in housing accommodation being severely strained, occurring chiefly in the smaller type of house.

Many houses which were the subject of Demolition Orders and Undertakings not to Use have been re-occupied, two of them under licence. Twenty-six of such houses have been requisitioned by the Council and used to accommodate evacuees and the conditions in some of these have been unsatisfactory, although towards the end of the year, when certain necessary repairs had been completed, there was a considerable improvement.

No case of bed bug infestation has been found.

SANITARY ACCOMMODATION.

Fourteen vault closets have been replaced by eight earth closets and six water closets. Eighteen earth closets have been converted to water closets. In addition five new earth closets and fifty-nine new water closets have been constructed.

A feature of the year was the influx of evacuees and refugees into unfit houses ; the occupants usually consisted of women and children and Nuisances frequently resulted from the improper disposal of pail contents.

HOUSE REFUSE.

Collections of house refuse have been maintained, as also have the unsatisfactory methods of disposal.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

The disinfection of premises has been carried out after all cases of infectious disease. Arrangements have continued to be made for the disinfection of bedding at the Isolation Hospital, Wincanton.

SALVAGE.

Early in the year an attempt was made to collect salvage on a voluntary basis but the results were far from satisfactory and during August a complete salvage Scheme was put into operation, involving the monthly collection at all occupied houses.

In a Rural District this is necessarily costly but this cost is made much heavier by reason of two factors—

- (1) The necessity to hire vehicles.
- (2) The fact that householders do not co-operate to any great extent, particularly in the smaller Parishes.

The quantity of material collected is reasonably satisfactory although inspections at the various dumps show that a great deal is still being wasted. The amounts collected and sold during the year are—

	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Value.</i>		<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Value.</i>
Paper	59	£251	Iron	111	£180
Textiles	4	£26	Bottles	154 gross	£22
Bones	3	£11			

The complete separation of the two collection schemes, house refuse and salvage, has on the balance no practical nor financial advantages.

INSPECTIONS.

The total number of inspections was 6,253.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACTS.

Four Statutory notices have been served of which three have been complied with.

Informal action has been necessary in 62 cases, in 49 of which the nuisances have been remedied.

MILK AND DAIRIES ORDER.

The structural improvement of premises has come almost to a standstill, although the Ministry of Supply have released building materials for the repair of cowsheds in a few cases. Attention has been given to the provisions dealing with cleanliness rather than those dealing with structural requirements.

MILK SUPPLIES.

471 Samples were taken during the year. Of 5 samples of Pasteurised, all were satisfactory ; of 139 samples of Tuberculin Tested, 100 were satisfactory ; of 294 samples of Accredited, 209 were satisfactory and in only one case were Tebercle Bacilli present (out of 33 samples taken).

The number of premises licensed for Tuberculin Tested milk production has decreased from 40 to 38 and for Accredited Milk production increased from 99 to 114.

A licence to pasteurise Milk has been granted to Messrs. Dried Milk Products, Ltd., Wincanton.

PLANS.

49 Plans were presented and 45 were approved, involving 3 new houses and 29 structural alterations and additions, including drainage schemes.

HOUSING (RURAL WORKERS) ACTS.

Schemes comprising five houses were approved and sent forward to the County Council and ten houses were completed.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

On January 1st, 1940, slaughtering animals for food was centralised and with the exception of the two Bacon Factories all slaughtering in the District ceased. As a result it has been possible for the first time to provide for an adequate inspection of meat. During the year Mr. Padfield found it impossible to continue his inspections at the Bacon Factories and I took over these on October 1st.

The results of the three months inspections at the Factories were—

Number of Pigs Inspected	...	2785.
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The Principal condemnations were 1 carcase, 200 heads, and 18 plucks, the majority of which were affected with Tuberculosis. Complete records are kept.

Arrangements were made to assist the Sherborne U.D.C. from whose District the meat consumed in this area was supplied.

From July 1st I took over responsibility for the inspection of meat from animals slaughtered on Monday in each week.

The ideal conditions of a public abattoir naturally were not obtainable as the two premises used were limited in extent.

The two chief criticisms I have to make are, firstly the fact that animals were often slaughtered immediately on arrival and were not allowed a period of rest, and secondly, the fact that there is insufficient suitable hanging and storage room in one of the two slaughterhouses.

The results of these inspections at Sherborne were—

INSPECTED 273 bovines, including 1 calf, the principal condemnations being 1 carcase, 2 forequarters, 29 lungs, 28 livers, and 15 heads.

INSPECTED 279 pigs, the principal condemnations being 5 carcasses, 21 heads, 14 plucks and 7 livers.

INSPECTED 421 Sheep, the principal condemnations being 1 carcase and 9 livers.

In bovines and pigs, the chief cause of condemnation was tuberculosis.

About $2\frac{1}{4}$ cwts. of foreign lamb were seized at butchers shops and used for pig food.

Four casualties, three bovines slaughtered at Yenston and one sheep slaughtered at Milborne Port were examined.

Two bovine carcasses, 1 set of intestines and about 20-lbs. of mutton were condemned.

A quarter of English beef was seized and condemned owing to putrefaction.

FIRE WATCHERS ORDER, 1940.

No difficulty has been experienced under this Order as the Factory owners have been ready and willing to make the necessary arrangements.

IRON AND STEEL SCRAP.

In September and October I shared with Mr. Johnson, the District Surveyor, the work of making the district survey of fixed and demolition iron and steel scrap, organised by the Ministry of Supply.

I am, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

R. G. GRAY.

CASTLE CARY,
SOMERSET,

January 17th, 1941.

To T. E. COULSON, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.S.E.,
Medical Officer of Health,
WINCANTON.

SIR,

CASTLE CARY SUB-DISTRICT.

I beg to submit my Report for year ended the 31st of December, 1940.

**PUBLIC HEALTH (MEAT) REGULATIONS, 1924, AND
SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS ACT, 1933.**

I have continued the inspections under these Regulations. Carcases of animals and portions of carcases found to be unfit for human consumption were either used for cattle food or otherwise utilised for National War purposes. Mr. R. G. Gray took over all the inspections under these Regulations from the 30th of September, 1940.

SHOPS ACT, 1934.

The Shops generally with a very few exceptions comply with the provisions of this Act.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

I have visited the Bakehouses periodically and where defects existed have either given verbal or written notices to remedy the same. Other Factories and Workshops have been visited and in cases where Certificates were required as to satisfactory means of escape in case of fire such Certificates have been granted to the Proprietors after various necessary alterations had been effected.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1938.

Various consignments of meat were condemned as unfit for human consumption and this meat was either used for cattle feeding or for National War purposes after being Certified by the local Justices of the Peace.

HOUSING (RURAL WORKERS) ACTS, 1926-38.

No action has been taken by me under these Acts during the year beyond collecting the Certificates from the Owners of reconstructed houses under Section 3 of the 1926 Act, and various correspondence in connection therewith.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACT, 1919.

During the year inspections under this Act have been continued and I am pleased to be able to inform you that the conditions reported to you in my 1939 Report in regard to the menace in the Parish of Queen Camel have very materially improved.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. J. HAINE PADFIELD,

(Inspector).

